

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration of the present application. Claims 1, 2 and 4-18 are currently pending in the instant application. Claims 1, 6, 12, 15 and 16 have been amended. Claims 1, 12, 15 and 16 are independent. Claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 2 and 14-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,940,824). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicant respectfully submits that these rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. Specifically, Applicant submits that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the unique combination of limitations of the claimed invention. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

For example, with respect to claim 15, Applicant submits that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of: "a retrieval device for retrieving

said image while said compressed image data is in a compressed state, *wherein said storage device stores compressed image data of split images in which said image is split into a plurality of regions and wherein said retrieval device performs retrieval of said image using said compressed image data after said compressed image data of said split images in regions which are in a point symmetry relation with each other about the center of said image are added.*"

(emphasis added)

With respect to claim 16, Applicant submits that the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of: "*wherein said storage device stores compressed image data of split images in which said image is split into a plurality of regions; and a retrieval device for retrieving said image stored in said storage device while said compressed image data is in a compressed state to read said information of the image processing corresponding to the image of interest, wherein said retrieval device performs retrieval of said image using said compressed image data after said compressed image data of said split images in regions which are in a point symmetry relation with each other about the center of said image are added.*" (emphasis added) Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

The Examiner asserts the description in col. 7, lines 31 to 35 of Takahashi as the support for the rejection of claims 15 and 16. However, the cited description actually describes shifting the relative positioning of the retrieval reference image R with respect to a retrieval target image S-n in a shift and expansion/reduction circuit 77, to obtain a correlation between the retrieval reference image R and the retrieval target image S-, as illustrated in Fig. 5 (of Takahashi).

Specifically, the description cited by the Examiner actually describes the the following type of retrieval that is different than the claimed invention. If the retrieval reference image R and the retrieval target image S-n are exemplified as shown in Fig. 5, e.g., the retrieval reference image R does not correspond to the entire region of the retrieval target image S-n, but corresponds to a partial region thereof, the differential operation circuit 72 directly calculates a difference between the image data of the retrieval reference image R and the image data of the retrieval target image S-n within the partial region covered by the retrieval reference image R (see fig. 6). The correlation evaluation circuit 73 evaluates the correlation between the retrieval reference image R and the retrieval target image S-n on the basis of the calculated difference.

Then, this evaluation process takes place over the entire region of the retrieval reference image S-n, shifting the relative positioning of the retrieval reference image R with respect to the retrieval target image S-n in a shift and

expansion/reduction circuit 71. In this way, the correlation between the retrieval reference image R and the retrieval target image S-n is obtained.

This processing to obtain the correlation (correlation determination processing) is performed for a plurality of retrieval target images (S-1, S-2, ..., S-n), and to thereby select a retrieval target image having a higher correlation with the retrieval reference image R among the plurality of retrieval target images.

Accordingly, it should be apparent that the Takahashi reference describes calculating the differences by simply using the image data of the retrieval reference image R and the image data of the retrieval target image S-n corresponding to the retrieval reference image R as they are. Specifically, neither the image data of retrieval reference image R, nor the image data of the corresponding retrieval target image S-n is added to the data of a region which is in a point symmetry relation therewith. Further, the correlation is not evaluated by using this added data. Accordingly, the rejection to claims 2, 14, 15 and 16 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims .1, 3-13, 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,940,824) in view of Otto (U.S. Patent No. 6,244,514). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicant submits that all of the rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. Specifically, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the unique combination of elements of claims 1, 12, 15 and 16. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 1, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of “a compression device for compressing image data of said image to produce said compressed image data, *wherein said compression device performs normalization for correcting fluctuation of said image data in reading prior to compression of said image data of said image to perform setup of said image data.*” (emphasis added)

With respect to claim 12, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the combination of limitations of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of “a retrieval device for retrieving said image stored in said storage device while said compressed image data is in a compressed state to read said information of the image processing

corresponding to the image of interest; and a compression device for compressing image data of said image to produce said compressed image data, *wherein said compression device performs normalization for correcting fluctuation of said image data in reading prior to compression of said image data of said image to perform setup of said image data.*" (emphasis added) Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

In the claimed invention of claim 1 and 12, normalization of the image data prior to compression is provided. The Examiner acknowledges that Takahashi does not teach or suggest this feature, and relies upon the alleged teaching of Otto to cure this deficiency. However, the Examiner alleges that Otto suggests normalizing an image data to reduce the number of possible maps for the purpose of minimizing the data amount. Applicant submits that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have modified the alleged teachings of Takahashi in view of Otto as suggested by the Examiner.

For example, normalization of the image data prior to compression in the claimed invention compensates (normalizes) fluctuations due to the different processes of obtaining the image data of respective images, e.g., such as the fluctuations in light modulations to scan in cases where images photographed on photographic films are photoelectrically read by a scanner. The normalization of the image data prior to compression in the claimed invention is performed to set up a predetermined value of the compressed image data of

the image such as an average value, maximum value or minimum value thereof as a reference value, and preferably to obtain the same average value of the compressed image data between the images and the retrieved images. The average value is utilized in setting up an image, i.e., an image data (refer to line 6 from the bottom in page 24 to line 4 in page 26 in the specification of the present application).

Thus, the normalization of the image data prior to compression in the claimed invention is quite different from Otto's alleged normalization of an image data to reduce the number of possible maps for the purpose of minimizing the data amount. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the rejections to claims 1, 4-13, 17 and 18 are improper and should be withdrawn.

Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance the prosecution of the present application, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 12 to clarify the claimed normalization process from the alleged process of Otto. Specifically, the normalization of the image data prior to compression in the claimed invention includes normalization for correcting fluctuation of said image data during reading.

In accordance with the above discussion of the patents relied upon by the Examiner, Applicant respectfully submits that these documents, either in combination together or standing alone, fail to teach or suggest the invention as is set forth by the claims of the instant application.

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Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections are respectfully requested. Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that the instant application is in a condition for allowance.

As to the dependent claims, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable due to their dependence upon an allowable independent claim, as well as for additional limitations provided by these claims.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew T. Shanley, Registration No. 47,074 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Applicant respectfully petitions under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and § 1.17 for a one-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of **\$110.00** is attached hereto.

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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